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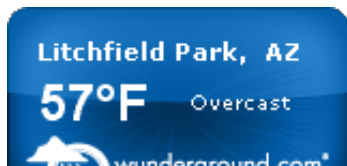
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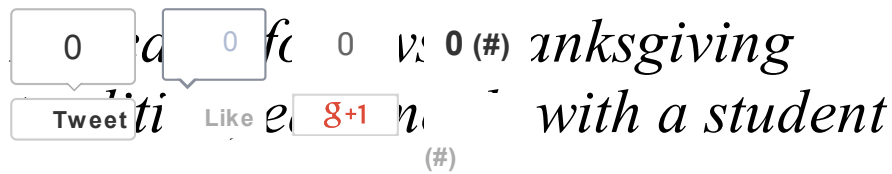
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Breaking bread

Submitted by Charity Yodis on Fri, 11/29/2013 - 12:00am



Between the hustle and bustle of getting the Thanksgiving bird just right, helping the children with their school projects, and mapping out the best route to those holiday discounts, it's easy to forget about why this holiday is so important to begin with.

While some people enjoy the day surrounded by friends and family, around a large table (or in front of a football game), it is important to think about the original Thanksgiving story and how that can be applied to today's world.

Although the idea of celebrating the harvest season has been in place since the Roman Empire, John Frasure, history faculty member at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, said it was the Native Americans who started the tradition.

"The Native Americans, actually, were the instigators of bringing food to the colonies," he said. "They kind of instigated the day of thanks."

They were two very different cultural groups celebrating the harvest by enjoying a meal together.

"It really stimulated harmony between them," Frasure said. "That wasn't the norm."

Fast forward a few hundred years, and people today are still living out the concepts taught by the natives at that time.

The idea that sometimes it is good to sit down and enjoy a meal with someone who is completely different from ourselves.

Sometimes, just the simple act of sitting down and breaking bread together can make a real difference in someone's life.

"I think the day gives us opportunities to think about the less fortunate or somebody we're having problems with in our family," Frasure said.

One teacher at Garden Lakes Elementary School lives out those ideals in his day-to-day work.

Tim Ramsey, the former assistant principal, used to eat lunch with a student whose behavior was, well, less than desirable.

He wrote a short story about his experience, and called it *Can I Eat Witchu?*

Because the student misbehaved, he was often sent to Ramsey's office where the two would have conversations, eat lunch together, and some days go for walks around the school yard.

"I noticed that when he shared lunch time with me, he was calmer, older in a way," Ramsey wrote in his short story.

Although the child still had some behavioral problems, throughout those couple of years of eating lunch together, Ramsey saw him become a little more calm, he said.

"There are so many kids out there like him that just need an extra high five or a handshake or a hug, or a good calm word," he said.

Ramsey had lunch with the boy, whose name was changed to Rogelio in the story, almost every day from second to third grade.

Rogelio would eventually move to a different town with his family and attend a different school.

But Ramsey recommends for people to spend time with others in order to see past some of the behavior.

"You got to sit down, you got to eat with them, you got to talk with them so that you know something about them," he said. "You get to know who they are, not just their discipline file."

"If I hadn't spent all those hours and hours walking with him, I wouldn't know there was that diamond in there," he said.

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